



**Southeast New Mexico Fire Prevention Team**

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **STAGE IV CLOSURE ORDER ON LINCOLN NATIONAL FOREST – EFFECTIVE MAY 23, 2006**

Alamogordo, NM (May 22, 2006) – The Lincoln National Forest is under an emergency closure order, signed by Acting Forest Supervisor, Lou Woltering, effective at 8:00 a.m., May 23, 2006. Stage IV closure means the Forest is closed to public use except for persons with permits specifically outlining their authorized activities at this level of closure.

The Bureau of Land Management's Fort Stanton Area of Critical Concern (ACEC) will remain closed with the exception of those individuals with valid Fort Stanton Cave Permits and, under special permit, the Lincoln County Overland Stage. The Overland Stage uses the Fort Stanton Cave Road and the road leading to the Merchant Marine Cemetery. All other lands within the Fort Stanton ACEC will remain closed to all visitors.

Recent rains have been very scattered and light having minimal impact on the dry fuel conditions on the Forest and surrounding lands. The closure is implemented for public safety, protection of property interspersed throughout the Lincoln National Forest and to reduce the threat of human-caused wildland fires during periods of extreme fire danger. Local communities have been very supportive of the restrictions and extremely vigilant in their efforts to prevent fires from starting.

The closure does not affect Federal and New Mexico State Highways that lead into the mountain communities. The surrounding towns and villages welcome visitors for sightseeing, shopping and community festivals. Contact the local chambers of commerce or arts councils for the City of Alamogordo, and the Villages of Cloudcroft, Tularosa, Ruidoso, Ruidoso Downs, Mayhill, Sacramento, Weed, Timberon, Capitan and Queen to obtain a calendar of events. Apache Point Observatory and National Solar Observatory at Sunspot are still open and the public is encouraged to visit these sites and areas.

For more information on current fire restrictions on public lands in New Mexico and Arizona, call toll-free 1-877-864-6985 or visit the Southwest Area Wildland Fire Operations website at: [www.fs.fed.us/r3/fire](http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/fire).

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